

THE POINT

THE FITCHBURG STATE COLLEGE STUDENT JOURNAL

FINAL ISSUE

SPRING 2001

WEEK OF MAY 1

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Letters to the Editor:

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

Mr. Sposato,

Several recent issues of "The Point" have been cause for concern, and it is clear that the paper is not fulfilling its obligations to the faculty, staff, and students of FSC. The policy of the paper states; " 'The Point' is the news source of Fitchburg State College." As such, there are certain functions it is rightfully expected to serve.

The purposes of an official news publication are many. Among them: an obligation to inform by reporting relevant, local news; providing a forum for legitimate editorial opinion and public debate; and offering entertainment through the inclusion of feature articles, human interest stories, and the limited use of comic strips and political satire.

Through timely features reporting on campus events, sports updates, and general news items, the majority of your staff and contributors make an attempt at fulfilling these responsibilities in a professional manner.

However, your arrogant self-aggrandizing, along with the implied agenda that you bring to the paper, seriously hinders your staff in their efforts to produce a quality publication. Such actions call into question your ability to carry out the editorial duties with which you've been charged.

Without question, any editor with a legitimate agenda should stand his ground in the face of criticism. In the natural course of his job, such an editor is bound to offend a portion of his audience on occasion, by way of what he sees fit to print. However, you are not such an editor, and the so-called 'slant' you have arbitrarily decided to give to 'The Point' is directly at fault for the numerous deficiencies reflected in the final product. At best, your operating philosophy is vague and ill-defined; at worst, it is highly suspect and should be critically scrutinized by all concerned.

First, to openly attack readers, by way of editorial replies, is extremely unprofessional; and to use profanity in doing so is simply wrong. In fact, the inclusion of profanity at any point within a newspaper is questionable. Although it may have its limited uses (in official quotes which provide needed detail and flavor to the story), the content in which you use it is utterly unacceptable. By engaging in this practice, you diminish the quality of 'The Point' and reduce the standards to which it should be held.

Further, responses to letters should only be included when a correction or elaboration on a specific point is needed. They should never be used to present personal editorial opinion or to berate a reader. Certainly, editors reserve the right to express an alternative point of view. However, such expression is usually relegated to the editorial page, and most often addresses a current 'hot-button' issue which is of concern to a wide range of readers.

Second, it is hard to understand where you are coming from when you self-righteously claim your goal with the paper is to persuade others to break the mold of conformity. If this is your mission, there is little evidence of it amidst the inconstant blend of material you choose to include in 'The Point.'

The content of most issues is sporadic and haphazardly presented. There is a clear lack of purpose and organization to the current format. Legitimate news items are often buried in the back pages—hidden among irrelevant artwork and pointed commentary. Far too often it seems as if certain items are included simply for their sophomoric shock value, and not because of any actual newsworthiness or thought-provoking value.

In addition, several other editorial improprieties are repeated with each issue. Errors in spelling and grammar are frequently overlooked; story jumps fail to direct readers to the correct pages; in fact the page numbers are often missing; color, font, and design choices are flawed; there is an overabundance of what are supposed to be politically satirical cartoons; and there is a serious misuse of the limited available space. Regarding the

latter, the front page of each issue should not be wasted as it is. It should serve to draw readers in by presenting the most relevant stories, and not make them wonder what your point or purpose is.

In past issues, you have responded to such criticism by stating that the more educated among the student body will figure out the point you are trying to make. You further state that, by doing what you do, you are somehow raising the collective intellectual level of the college by forcing readers to critically consider what you have chosen to present. Unfortunately, you are apparently too obsessed with self-glorification to realize your actions are having the opposite effect.

You fail, also to recognize it is because of the very fact your readers ARE educated that they choose to take issue with your blatant misuse of editorial powers. In the end, you only succeed in putting greater distance between yourself and those you claim you are trying to reach.

Third, to believe, as you do, that the student body is only made up of the "look-alike, dress-alike" clones you despise, is to offer proof of your own narrow-mindedness. The campus population consists of a vast cross section of people. The mix is one of both young and old, and richly diverse in its cultural and ethnic representation. All are potential readers and contributors to 'The Point,' and all are represented by it. To not take our interests into more serious consideration, is to commit a great disservice to us all, and to those who choose to advertise within your pages as well.

Continued on page 11

THE POINT

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
James Sposato

MANAGING EDITOR
Justin Crawford

NEWS EDITOR
Joanna Jackson

FEATURES EDITOR
Amy Bobrowski

OPINION EDITOR
Johnny Ringo

COPY EDITOR
Kathleen Coughlin

ART EDITOR

PHOTO EDITOR

Spanky McTitwhistle

Heather Rhodes

SPORTS EDITOR

Shaun Moriarty

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Sammy "Two Times"

WEBSITE MANAGER

Spiderleg Hampton

ADVERTISING MANAGER

Tim Daoust

BUSINESS MANAGER

James Pierpoint

WRITERS THIS ISSUE

S.C.

Sharlene Gugarty

Skip Daily IV

James Pelletier

Nicole Fernald

James Sposato

Brian Gelinis

Mark Whittemore

FACULTY ADVISOR

Doris Schmidt

The Point considers for publication letters to the editor on any topic of interest to the Fitchburg State College community. All submissions run at the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief and are subject to editing for style and length.

All articles must be typed or legibly handwritten and include a name and phone number in case of questions. All letters in response to an article must be submitted within two days after the article is published.

Announcements should be short, including dates, places, times and a contact person.

The content of any article labeled Opinion does not necessarily represent the views of The Point, its staff, or Fitchburg State College.

The Point is the student news source of Fitchburg State College. The reprinting of any material herein is prohibited without the express written consent of the Editor-in-Chief. All material submitted to The Point becomes the property of The Point.

A SECRET MEETING OF CALIFORNIA UTILITY COMPANIES...
 PERHAPS SELLING OFF OUR POWER PLANTS WASN'T SUCH A GOOD IDEA AFTER ALL.
 BUT ALL OUR STUDIES INDICATED THAT OUR PROFIT MARGINS WOULD SOAR ONCE WE WERE FREED FROM THE BURDEN OF ACTUALLY PRODUCING ELECTRICITY!

YES--WE WOULD JUST BUY CHEAP AND PLENTIFUL ENERGY ON THE SPOT MARKET--RESELL IT TO OUR CUSTOMERS--AND POCKET THE DIFFERENCE! IT SHOULD HAVE WORKED LIKE A CHARM!

WHO KNEW THAT THE FREE MARKET WOULD TURN OUT TO BE SO DARNED UNPREDICTABLE?



WELL, THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO NOW.

YOU MEAN ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR LUDICROUSLY SHORT-SIGHTED COURSE OF ACTION AND BEG THE PUBLIC'S FORGIVENESS?

NO, YOU MORON--BLAME THE ENVIRONMENTALISTS!

OH--RIIIGHT!

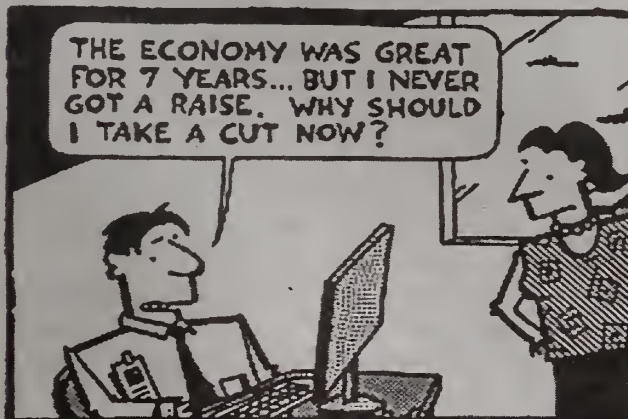
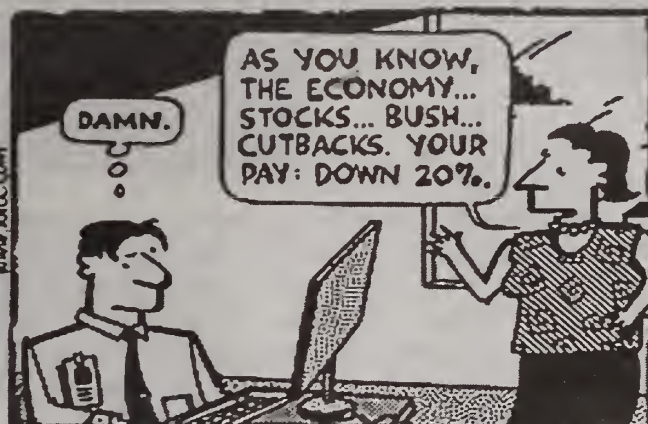
DAMN THOSE ALL-POWERFUL TREE HUGGERS!

NONE OF THIS WOULD BE HAPPENING--IF NOT FOR THEIR REGULATORY STRANGLEHOLD!



THINK ANYONE WILL BUY IT?

HEY--WHAT HAVE WE GOT TO LOSE?



4-19-01-A

Play Host

The Oxford Intensive School of English (OISE), which will run a summer program at Fitchburg State College in July and August, is now looking for host families in the area.

OISE students, aged 14 to 18, are primarily from Western Europe, and will be in the city for two to four weeks. Many are seeking to improve their English-speaking skills.

Host families, who receive compensation, will provide a single room, two meals per day and a bag lunch.

Call (617) 357-OISE for more information.

Stomp Out Hunger

Once again the Annual Walk for Hunger is fast approaching. This is a wonderful time to gather a group of friends, family, and coworkers to make a difference. It will be taking place on Sunday, May 6, 2001.

By joining this year you will be a vital part of a Massachusetts tradition. . . making a difference in the lives of hungry families and children in your community. Whether you walk one mile or all twenty, you will be a star. "Project Bread" is also looking for volunteers to help with registration tables, checkpoints, and many more. So if you cannot make the walk DO NOT STOP there. Any help is encouraged. For sponsorship and registration pamphlets, please visit the Volunteer Center or call extension 3649.

Credit Card Companies Cash in on Student Debt

by James Pelletier

With the Bush administration looking more and more like Mussolini's "Corporatist" government, it comes as no surprise that the President plans to hand a rapidly growing market of college students to the credit card companies.

Back when the constitution was being formed, people who got into financial trouble would be put in debtor's prisons. Our Founding Fathers thought that was not a great idea, so they decided to protect Americans by giving them the civil right to declare bankruptcy. In Chapter 7 a person can wipe out past debts and be given a fresh financial start. Of course, this was in the days before credit cards.

Credit card companies have been aggressively trying to change the bankruptcy laws for the last three years by paying off politicians to get their votes. Even with all the lobbying that helped get the bill through Congress last year, President Clinton vetoed the bill, describing it as too harsh on consumers.

During the 2000 campaign contributions to federal candidates and the political parties from banks, finance and credit card companies totaled \$37.7 million, compared with \$20.9 million in 1996, according to the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics (CRP).

The CRP reports that the biggest single donor to Bush's campaign was MBNA, the nation's largest credit card company, which gave \$240,675. The chairman of its bank unit, Charles M. Cawley, was one of Mr.

Bush's biggest fund-raises. After the election MBNA also pledged an additional \$100,000 to help pay for Mr. Bush's inaugural festivities. Citigroup and Morgan Stanley Dean Witter & Co., the No.2 and No.3 credit card issuers, were among Bush's 10 biggest campaign contributors. The Republican Senate campaign committee received \$310,000 and the Democratic \$200,000 from MBNA.

Senator Patrick J. Leahy of Vermont said that colleagues had told him privately that they were "committed to the banks and credit card companies." He also stated that some senators were voting for the bill because they knew that credit card companies were "a very good source" of political contributions.

The new law would make more debtors file under Chapter 13, which would require them to repay a portion of their debt over five years and, of course, yield credit card companies windfall profits. Currently, about 70 percent of bankruptcy filers use Chapter 7; the rest use Chapter 13. Financial analysts anticipate that the bill

would mean billions of dollars in extra profits for credit card issuers over the next decade. Not a bad return for a \$37.7 million investment.

As Howard M. Metzenbaum, head of the Consumer Federation of America observed, "The cries, claims and concerns of vulnerable Americans who have suffered a financial emergency have been drowned out by the political might of the credit card industry."

On March 15th, 2001, the credit card companies had stuffed enough senators pockets, and the new bankruptcy bill was passed with a vote of 85-15. The 15 "nay" votes were all cast by Democrats. However, election 2000 vice-presidential candidate Joe Lieberman's name was noticeably absent from that list. More interesting

was the fact that both Massachusetts senators,

Kennedy and Kerry, were on the list. Nevertheless, the bill is filled with loopholes and exemptions for the wealthy; for instance, Texas and Florida have unlimited homestead exemptions which allow the well-to-do to transfer their money into a home property, write off millions in debt, and then keep their mansions.

Among opponents of the bill is Lawrence P. King, a law professor at New York University. King said, "In my 40 years of dealing with Congress on bankruptcy legislation, this is the worst I've ever seen. It's the kind of bill that makes you want to point your fingers at the individual congressmen and say, 'Shame on you.'"

Others criticize credit card companies for mailing out billions of solicitations and trying to hook college students, who may get deep into debt and have trouble repaying. Senator Dodd of Connecticut opposes the other senator from his state, Joe Lieberman, and is uneasy about widespread marketing of credit cards to college

students. In the worst cases, critics say, students run up big debts and are forced to drop out and work full time to pay them off. The CFA reports that the credit card companies sent out 3.3 billion mail offers last year and lines of credit card debt increased 15%, to \$2.43 trillion at the end of the third quarter of 2000.

The only state where both senators opposed the bill was Massachusetts. It seems that Kennedy, Kerry and the educators of the state understand the consequences of the bill whereas those from other states do not.

Here are some interesting facts. In Massachusetts there are 129 degree-granting institutions. Data available from the National Center for Educational Statistics states that in 1995 there were 413,794 students enrolled in Massachusetts, and there were 64,892 freshmen. In the United States there were a total of 14,261,781 students enrolled in 1995, and it is projected that there will be 15,556,000 in 2005. The largest group from that increase will be under 22 years old.

Let's say you are a credit card company, and you want to make billions of dollars.

What would you need to do in order to insure that you could lend students money and guarantee that they would have to repay you? I guess if you dismantle and change the bankruptcy laws that would be a good move.

What Kennedy, Kerry and Massachusetts educators realize is that students are at risk for being exploited. If college students have to drop out of school it will disrupt the financial stability of the educational institutions and have detrimental, long-

term effects on the overall education of our society. They understand that the credit card industry is applying pressure on students to get involved in the spending economy and that students might get into trouble with no way out.

A Harvard University law professor, Elizabeth Warren, has studied American's debt habits. Her research found that 120,000 people under 25 filed for bankruptcy last year, an increase of 50% since 1991. "People can get into financial trouble today in ways that were simply not possible 20 years ago" because of available credit, Warren said. "People are getting \$20,000 in debt, one pizza and one pair of tennis shoes at a time."

So what can you do? Each time a credit card company sends you a solicitation open it, remove the postage-paid envelope and return it empty.



Continued on page 9

Fuck 'em if they can't take a joke...

by James Sposato

Well, that got your attention didn't it. Now take a moment to ask why. Obviously because of the "vulgarity" in the title. But why should such a small word create such a big fuss. It tops the list of the "Seven Words You Can't Say on Television," is uniformly replaced when movies hit the small screen (leading to odd sobriquets like "Flippin' clown" or "Mother-fiver"), and is looked upon with such disfavor that there was a recent movie which showed the gouging out of a man's eye, but was able to get a PG-13 rating once three instances of the word fuck was removed. Closer to home, my use of the word fuck has been a point of contention (no pun intended) in this very paper. Even this article will be considered by some as just me fucking around again (or perhaps making a major fuck-up), and feel that I may now have gone too fucking far. So why do I use it?

Because even though fuck is a "bad word," it's a good word. Words are tools and any tool can be used for good or ill (except maybe guns). Think of the word fuck like a hammer. Used properly, a hammer can build a chair, a home or a church. Used improperly it can bash someone's head in; but just because it can doesn't mean that that is what it was made for.

With that in mind, I freely use the word fuck. However when I do, I upset some people. Why? Are they perhaps caught up in the context of the word itself? That might be the answer. I mean, we all know what fucking is, most of us have done some fucking at some point. 'Merikan society seems to be based on fucking. Look at every ad, every pop star, every made for TV movie on Lifetime; all are related in some way to fucking. But with all this fucking going on, what is it about the word that so offends? Merely the act itself? Does the word bring to mind all those nasty Freudian images we think we have evolved beyond?

Or maybe it's a class issue. Highbrows will claim that use of the word fuck shows a lack of breeding and I agree to a certain point. The most obvious use is the phrase "Fuck you," which is little more than verbal shorthand for "I lack the wit to argue any further" (and in modern 'Merika is usually followed by the sound of gunfire.) However, once again considering the

Continued on page 9

POINT STAFF MEETING

The Fitchburg State College Journal, known as The Point, is looking for additional staff members for the 2001-2002 academic year. All those interested in contributing are encouraged to attend an informational meeting on Thursday, May 3 at 3:30 p.m. in the Point Office located in the basement of the Hammond Building.

Positions are open for editors, staff, reporters, copy editors, distributors, and photographers. Work study money may be avail-

able for those assisting in the area of production. The Point is corresponding with professors and department heads in order to work out a program in which course credit is offered in exchange for work done with the paper.

Those currently on the staff are also encouraged to attend the meeting in order to share new ideas and meet others. If interested in contributing, but unable to attend, please contact Amy Bobrowski at ext. 3647 or ext. 5771, or through campus mail boxes 1474 or 6705.

Poetry Review

By Mark Whittemore

April was National Poetry Month. In honor of that, I figured I would do a few reviews of some poetry books. If I could take a minute, I'd like to tell The Point's readers there is much more to poets like Frost, Whitman, and Dickinson than you will cover in the one or two classes set aside to them during the term. So, if poets like them spark your interests, go out and buy a collection of theirs. It will be money well spent.

Now on to a contemporary poet, who is lesser known to the masses. His name is Donald Hall and a fine collection of his worth purchasing is *Old and New Poems*, published in 1990. For those fans of poetry that are new to Hall, you are in for quite a treat. Hall is a New England poet and one cannot help but compare him to his predecessors in the way that he captures the



spirit of these parts in words, like in "The Windows", or "Mount Kearsarge". *Old and New Poems* spans over forty years of Hall's career and shows the development of his assorted styles over several decades in various separate journals. I would go as far as to say that Hall is one of the finest poets of the latter half of the twentieth century, and hopefully one day his poetry will be found much more widely in college texts.

Hall also is, in my opinion, a very philosophical poet. He is able to convey a sense that there is something more, something bigger than self and existence. Many

poems are on the surface straightforward, but when you finish reading them, you think, "What did he really mean? And if he did mean what I think, how do I feel about that?" Examples of this can be seen in "The Snow", "A Set of Seasons", and "Brief Lives".

After reading Hall, you might find yourself now wanting to following his career as well. If you want to see the kind of poetry he finds interesting and print worthy, Hall will be the guest editor of the fall edition of *Ploughshares*, the Emerson College Creative Writing Journal, which is printed tri-quarterly.

Old and New Poems contains many different kinds of styles and there are just too many good poems in this collection to mention all in one writing. I hope that you will give Hall a chance and that you enjoy this collection of his poetry. Hall is one of those poets that every time you re-read his poetry, you will discover

something you didn't see before and find a new favorite piece. There are many "voices" of Donald Hall contained within these pages and if you like this collection, I would also suggest reading some of his more recent poems. A fair amount of his recent poems deal with the subject of his departed wife, Jane Kenyon, an interesting poet in her own right, who died in 1995. The poems show a new side of Hall and his ever-evolving poetry. The many sides of this beloved poet are countless as he travels his journey of life and generously shares it in his collection, *Old and New Poems*.

Closed for Business

by S. C.

Ok so I recently got out of this relationship that I just realized I was being treated more as an object than as person and now I am wondering why it took me so long to get out of it. Perhaps I was thinking, as many gals do, that I could change this misguided sweetie. Or maybe I wanted to prove something to myself. Don't ask me what, I still haven't figured that part out. Now things with my ex, strictly as friends, are better than ever, or were better than ever. That was until things started happening up between us again, but this time I'm not gonna make that same mistake and let some schmuck waste my precious time. I don't know what I was hoping for this second time around. I'm sticking to the reason that even though I knew it would be poor judgment on my part to give in and give the relationship (if you can even call it that, but that's another story) one last try, that I just missed being with somebody and I didn't see the need to spend a the last month here lonely. Nevertheless, I made a bad call. If I

wanted to piss off the entire male race at this campus, I could say guys never change. But I'll resist that inclination, but they certainly don't change that much in a time period of less than two weeks.

Let me just say, that my ex is not a bad guy. He's gonna make some girl very happy one day, but I'm not that girl. However this is not a bad thing. We'll call this boy "Ex." Ex and I had a great time hanging out, that is when we did hang out. The problem is we only spent time together when it was convenient for him. When he was bored my phone would ring. Ex didn't have anybody to go to DAKA with. . . ok I'll go even though I just came back from there. Ex didn't feel like doing work. . . ok I'll run right over even though I have a paper due tomorrow. That's what he expected. Now I ask, what about my plans? What if I wanted some company, or got hungry, or wanted to go see a movie? It was like pulling teeth just to get him to spend time with me. Ex would usually respond that he had a lot of work to do, or the more usual response that he was tired. Oh and my favorite

excuse for him not wanting to visit me in my dorm was that the temperature in here was always too high.

Boys, a few words of advice to you: You want convenience? ... Go buy yourself an inflatable girlfriend. She won't talk back. You don't have to take her out and if ya do, I bet she's a cheap date. You can stash her in your closet for a rainy day. And best of all, you know that when you wake up with her next to you in the morning, she won't look as bad as us mortal chicks because her makeup never wears off.

I don't mean to sound like the bitter ex-girlfriend, but I am entitled to at least feel used, warranting the division of two hearts better left wandering on their own separate paths. Being as it may, two songs have become timely themes for my life at this moment. The first, "Get Over Yourself" by Eden's Crush. Just the title gets me pumped. Then there's Destiny's Child's "Survivor." Take a listen girls and then take justified action. You will soon be sounding like Kevin Spacey in *American Beauty* saying, "I

rule." I know these songs fit in the Teeny Bopper category and I should probably not be confessing to listening to them, but in this guilty pleasure, I can't help but feel sickly liberated. I'm not one of those feminist types (I do shave my armpits and don't really like the shaved head look), but who can blame me for wanting out of something that is supposedly an equal effort, when in actuality it was 90% me and 10% him, while the whole time I was trying to convince myself that I just didn't get the ways he showed affection. That's one huge pile of B.S.

Now it's me time. If I need to study, I'm going to do so without interruption. If I feel like going out I'm going to instead of feeling guilty about not waiting by the phone. I made sure that when I showed him the door that he let himself out, but left it wide open for other opportunities, not romantic opportunities mind you, but open for anything that would make me happy being me and not trying to work at being something else for the benefits of others.

Senator John Kerry to speak at Commencement

United States Senator, John F. Kerry will present the commencement address at FSC's 105th graduation ceremony on May 26. Thousands of students, parents, faculty and friends will gather on the college quadrangle for the 10 a.m. ceremony. Kerry will also be presented with an honorary degree.

Kerry, currently serving his third term as a Massachusetts senator, is a member of the Senate Finance Committee and senior member of the Commerce Committee. He is also ranking member on the Senate Small Business Committee and has served for 16 years on the Foreign Relations Committee. Kerry serves in the Senate Democratic Leadership as chairman of the Steering and Coordination Committee. Among the issues he has focused during his years in the Sen-

ate are foreign policy, education reform, children's issues, economic growth, and the environment. In the last year, he has sought to expand health coverage for children not covered by Medicaid and to increase the federal minimum wage.

In his first term, he was an original co-sponsor of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit reduction plan, and has supported balanced budget legislation. He successfully pushed legislation for targeted preferential capital gains treatment of investment in new enterprises, and has been a leading advocate of a permanent research and development tax credit. In addition, he has sought reform of U.S. export controls.

Kerry was involved in the successful effort to obtain passage of

the 1993 campaign finance reform bill, and continues to be a leader in the push for campaign finance reform. He has also won preliminary approval for a proposal to establish a Police Corps that would add 80,000 new people annually to local police forces.

As a senior member of the Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate Intelligence Committee, Kerry is recognized as a leader in foreign policy. He was a principal sponsor of the State Department Authorization Act in 1994. In his role as chair of the Senate Democratic Steering and Coordination Committee, Kerry works with citizen groups, advocacy coalitions, and state and local affairs.

Kerry was first elected to public office as Massachusetts lieutenant governor in 1982. He was elected to

the Senate in 1984, and re-elected in 1990 and 1996. In the 1996 race, he defeated popular Republican Governor William Weld.

A graduate of Yale University, Kerry entered the Navy after graduation, and served as an officer on a gunboat in the Mekong Delta in Vietnam. He received a Silver Star, Bronze Star and three awards of the Purple Heart for his service in combat. Following his return home, he became an active leader of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War and a co-founder of the Vietnam Veterans of America. He attended Boston College Law School, and after graduating worked as a prosecutor in Middlesex County. Kerry, who lives in Boston, is married to Teresa Heinz.

freedom of speech

by Nicole Fernald

If one were to look at the FSC campus, one would assume that the student body is fairly open-minded about social issues like racism, classism, and homophobia. I too had thought, that at this point in history we have reached an understanding and acceptance of differences while at the same time developed a capability to recognize similarities between ourselves based on the fact that we are all human.

The students at this Leadership College are given the opportunities and exposure to define leadership in the classroom and in student activities. Can we really afford to be training future leaders who hold ignorant and unacceptable beliefs about those different from themselves? No.

Hate is something that humans discover on their own, it is something that is taught and experienced.

A few weeks ago, I represented Fitchburg State on the Alternative Spring Break with a group of fellow students. The students had met each other previously, but did not really know each other. We traveled to a community in West Philadelphia none had visited before. For a change, we were the minority and the neighborhood was shocked to see a group of young white people in their community.

Their shock at seeing us was nothing compared to the shock I felt when I heard prejudicial and unfounded comments about the neighborhood its residents. While most of the students did not share the sentiment, there were enough ignorant individuals to inspire each other to share their close-mindedness with the rest of the group.

Just because the neighborhood was filled with people struggling financially and different from most of us, students representing this Leadership College were making gross judgements based upon preconceived stereotypes about inner city communities. This mire of ignorance was not limited to the

external community.

On the trip, the group spent a lot of time together getting to know each other and discussing the days' events. Each person who attended the trip was an individual with his or her differences. Once again a small group of students felt the need to make homophobic comments directed towards and about other people on the trip. I was disgusted.

Fitchburg State College's mission statement declares: "Provide opportunities for social...success to enhance self esteem...Foster excellence in...service. Promote an atmosphere of collegiality, openness to ideas, and esprit de corps...Support racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity in the college community...Maintain a healthy, safe, and esthetic living and learning environment sensitive to local and global concerns" (www.fsc.edu/community/about/mission/).

When I look back now, I wish that I and others had taken more responsibility and done more to make those racist, classist, and homophobic people feel uncomfortable and let them know that what they were doing and saying is completely unacceptable and inappropriate. Even if you can't change a person you can educate and raise awareness about acceptance and love.

I don't want this to dissuade anyone into thinking that the Alternative Spring Break is not a good thing, because it is. The majority of the students who attended, represented Fitchburg State College with mature responsibility. Those students got from the trip what the organizers had hoped: a life-changing experience that will help guide them down a path that includes community service. However, as a student at this college, I am asking that this institution to do something about changing this attitude around campus, make this college community live up to its mission statement.

by Brian Gelinas

Much like the misguided policies of the old Soviet Politburo, the rampant political-correctness campaign sweeping across many college campuses today is nothing short of an outright assault against freedom of thought and expression. From Brown University to Berkeley, the PC pundits are waging a war of threats and intimidation in an attempt to silence the free exchange of any ideas they happen to disagree with. Labeling opposing ideas with any number of offensive terms, they are attempting to exercise totalitarian control over others by enforcing what they perceive to be the "correct" way of thinking. It is a phenomenon that should place every free-thinking American citizen on alert. Certainly, political correctness has played an important role in raising diversity awareness and sensitivity. However, this potentially positive force now seems to be having a more negative effect on society.

Recently, the College Republicans of Brown University were forced to withdraw an invitation to a debate on reparations for slavery which had been extended to conservative author David Horowitz, president of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture. Horowitz is an outspoken opponent of the current movement to gain monetary compensation for the descendants of black slaves.

The decision to rescind the invitation came about as a result of a controversial ad against reparations that Horowitz had placed in the Brown Daily Herald. The ad heightened racial tensions and created an atmosphere with the potential for violence. However, this was only after the PC police at Brown decided that the ad was a form of hate speech and should not have been run by the paper. The editors rightfully countered that it would be inconceivable to not run an ad based on its political content, simply because members of the campus population might disagree with

it. Yet protesters removed all copies of the Brown Daily Herald from campus news racks and attempted to break into the editorial office to destroy the remaining copies.

Similarly, campus groups at the University of California at Berkeley protested the Daily Californian's decisions to run one of Horowitz's ads. Horowitz spoke there, but under the protection of armed university police officers. Even so, his appearance was cut short as the audience became rowdy during a question-and-answer session, and Horowitz had to be escorted out by bodyguards.

The point to be made here is not whether reparations should be paid. The point is that an interchange of opposing ideas should be allowed to take place, and a legitimate college newspaper should not be subjected to selective mob censorship.

Simply because one may disagree with an idea or find it hurtful does not make the idea, or the expression of it, inherently offensive. The world is a big place, and one that is filled with many conflicting ideas and opinions. Because of this, it is unreasonable to expect to never be offended. The closing of minds at American colleges is disheartening, to say the least; and the coercive attempts to curb free speech reek of fascism. Such actions themselves are offensive, and erode the integrity of colleges everywhere.

Higher education is the umbrella under which a wide range of ideas and opinions should be openly expressed and debated. Through education, and with an open mind, one can come to understand all sides of an issue or idea. By doing so, one can form enlightened opinions on a wide range of topics while respecting the opinions of others. This key point was the teaching foundation for many universities and colleges. Today, however, too many administrations give in to the pressures placed on them by the PC corps.

Continued on page 9

Weston Auditorium
Sunday, May 6 at 6 p.m.

The FSC Falcon Players

are proud to present a staged reading of
the new full-length play

iNViSiBLE.

by Shane Desmond

with

Justin Grace Jesse Tarbell

Tara Flynn Randal Hennemuth Sara Zifcak

and Christina Bontempo

Admission is free.

Donations for the Matthew Shepard Foundation and
the Bobby Griffith Memorial Scholarship Fund
will be accepted at the door.

Reserve now!

Call 978.665.3581 or email: invisibleFSC@aol.com

TATTOOED LESBIAN KUNG-FU VAMPIRES: A BLOODY GOOD TIME

A Made-up Production
d: Pablo Fanque; w: Shanki
Vitipirude, p: Ferd Blandstein

Pablo Fanque, long a purveyor of fine artistic cult films has somehow gotten major financing to make his latest film and it is proving to be the first big blockbuster of the season. Combining the elegant choreographic violence of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* with the languid sensuality of *The Hunger*,

the brassy action of *Charlie's Angels* and the intricate plotting of *Teenage Nurses in Bondage*, he has pieced together a bawdy, brawny, action-packed romp through the "Death Rock" subculture.

The plot concerns the adventures of the revived corpse of Elizabeth Bathory, who through a series of dramatic and humorous events becomes part of an undead crime-fighting-trio of "Goth Chick" musicians. Along the way both she and her companions, Jen Marquis and the mysterious and silent Vyvyan, learn valuable lessons about life, love and the dangers of fondue forks.

The "gals" are played

adroitly by a triad of newcomers. The mad Countess herself is delicately overplayed with great relish by the inestimable Alice Laaksonenenenon, who (even though she is Finnish) plays to the camera with remarkable skill. Molly Niles plays the disarming Jen Marquis with tomboyish glee. During the "feeding scenes," she practically alters the suspension of disbelief by truly having a taste for her work. Sara Madras, (not shown) is a dusky exotic beauty who brings a splash of sass to her character of Vyvyan, the 2,300 year old Arabic priestess who is a killer in more ways than one.

As if these three lovely ladies were not enough to dazzle the senses, Fanque fills his scenes with astounding action sequences unlike anything seen before. In the middle of the film there is a spectacular moonlit chase through a marsh flitting with will-o'-the-wisps which is breathtaking in its beauty while also nerve racking in its suspense.

As with all actioners, it is the villain which makes or breaks the plot and here Fanque does not disappoint. Famous Greek actor/singer Zorba Mysterioso plays the evil Mr. Kyp, leader of a group of vampire hunters who ideally seek to eliminate the undead menace to humanity, but in truth are serving a much darker purpose.

The soundtrack, featuring such bands as The Cruicks Shadoos, 12th of Never and Moon Patrol, is edgy, loud and unforgiving but never intrusive. It serves to highlight certain sequences of the film (such as the climatic "Cthulhu Island" sequence) rather than draw attention away from the stunning visuals and beautiful cast.

All in all, *Tattooed Lesbian Kung-fu Vampires* is a great ride, full of everything we go to movies for: action, romance, adventure and of course tattooed lesbian kung-fu vampires. Lesbian kung-fu pride, do you have it?



Alice Laaksonenenenon and Molly Niles are out for blood in Pablo Fanque's latest.

what cost freedom?

Continued from page 7

As one letter to the Brown Daily Herald stated, "Free speech does not end when we find the speech offensive. The administration should seize this opportunity to remind students freedoms come with a price, and responsibility to defend those freedoms." And as U.S. News & World Report columnist John Leo recently wrote, "Being exposed to discomfoting ideas is the price of freedom." Indeed, the pampering of the PC zealots should not be tolerated. Doing so will only lead to the further decaying of America's already fragile educational institutions, and serve to weaken First Amendment rights. Because of this, college editors must stand their ground and continue to maintain an open forum through which a wide variety of ideas and information can be disseminated.

Censorship is not a right. One may embrace or reject an idea as one sees fit. However, one must not deny another the right to embrace or express an opposing idea. The most effective way to confront the opposition is by way of education. And it is because of this very fact that America's colleges must play down the PC movement. Traditional address and debate of the issues must replace threats and intimidation. If not, how long will it be before any topic is deemed inappropriate for discussion by the self-appointed thought police?

What th' fuck?

Continued from page 5

word as a tool instead of shying away from those dark pop-psychological implications, it can be a foremost tool, effective both in speech and writing.

For example I can say: "I disapprove of George W. Bush and his current policies, particularly those which seem to match the agenda of the religious right." It gets the meaning across, but lies flat and lifeless on the page. However, if I instead say: "L'il Georgie Bush is a drooling gibbering fuck who has his little monkey head so far up the Christian Coalition's ass, he could wear Pat Robertson as a hat," it not only gets the meaning across in a much more visceral way, but allows the anthropomorphic imagery (vis a vis the "ass" of the Christian Coalition) to seem poetic in comparison.

Now this is not to say I think fuck should be used in everyday conversation, especially not in every sentence. When I hear a guy in oh-so-fashionably ratty khakis and an American Eagle T-shirt tell his friend "Dude, the fucking guy was so fucking fucked-up. He was like...fucking gone, yo," I cringe and weep at the fact that he's old enough to vote. Using fuck in this way is like filing your nails with a belt sander, it is using too powerful a tool for too mundane a job.

So, you can get indignant at someone using "the F word," look down your nose at them as though they had just asked "How're they hanging?" to a survivor of testicular cancer; or you can take the high road. You can treat it as just another tool in the workshed of your vocabulary. You can try to use it more often and more appropriately so that someday it might lose its taboo. After all, in the end, fuck is just a word and words only have as much power over us as we give them.

"It's not the words that are offensive, it's how you use them. The words themselves mean nothing." - Lenny Bruce

JOIN KELLY'S HEROES

by Sharlene Gugarty

While most students will be leaving the FSC campus right after exams, the college is a busy place all year long. The administrative offices remain open, there are two sessions of classes and, beginning August 1, final preparations will be underway for the annual AmeriCulture Arts Festival.

AmeriCulture brings together theatrical professionals, college students and members of the local and regional

community for a celebration of the arts, which is believed to be unique in the nation. "This year's theme is 'The American Family: Comic, Conflicted and Courageous'," said Kelly Morgan, festival director. This theme will be illuminated in the many exhibits and performances held from September 19 through October 14.

"Casting is completed for actors

in the productions of Our Town, The Glass Menagerie, and Captains and Courage," said Morgan, "but we always need people backstage and helping at the performances".

In addition to those three plays, the 2001 festival will include a series of short scenes, sketch comedy, a dance festival and the return of Stare and Share. "We'll have performances on campus, at

McKay and at the Applewild School," said Morgan. Having exhibits and performances held off-campus at locations



throughout Fitchburg is one way the Festival involves the Fitchburg community at large to participate.

Volunteers are needed to build sets, make costumes and assist with the behind-the-scenes tasks that make an undertaking of this size successful. If you are interested in helping with AmeriCulture, contact Kelly Morgan.

Admission to Debtor's Prison

Continued from page 4

By doing this you are casting your "vote" against being exploited. Not only will they have to pay the postage, but they will get the message that students are not going to be taken advantage of.

You can also write to your political representatives before the final vote. E-mail and phone calls are not taken as seriously as hardcopy.

Don't use credit cards, and discourage your friends from being exploited: "Friends don't let friends get into debt with credit cards."

Request that your college's administration not sell your mailing address to credit card companies.

The student government, faculty and administration should aggressively educate students about the consequences of debt. It is in the educational institution's self-interest not to have college students dropping out of school in order to repay credit card companies.

It's your future. It's your choice. Take action, or Do not pass Go. Do not spend \$200. Go directly to Debtor's Prison.

LOWELL GENERAL HOSPITAL

LEARN MORE ABOUT US AT
WWW.LOWELLGENERAL.ORG

SO WHAT ARE YOU DOING THIS SUMMER?

HOW ABOUT A JOB THAT:

- ✓ Increases your future earning potential
- ✓ Gives you valuable experience
- ✓ Exposes you to a specialized clinical setting

FIND OUT FOR
YOURSELF

Summer employment opportunities for students who have completed 3 years of nursing school and are interested in gaining some clinical experience in a hospital setting. Work up to 40 hours a week in one of our clinical areas. We have openings in the following areas:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| ✓ Operating Room | ✓ Behavioral Health |
| ✓ Post-Anesthesia Care | ✓ Emergency Department |
| ✓ Intensive Care | ✓ Medical-Surgical |
| ✓ Intermediate Care | ✓ Transitional Care |

Student Nurses

Fluency in other languages is a plus.
You may apply for these positions on-
line or in person. Our office is open
daily from 8AM to 4:30PM.

Human Resources Department
Lowell General Hospital
295 Varnum Avenue
Lowell, MA 01854
Fax: (978) 937-6891

E-mail: resume@lowellgeneral.org

An equal opportunity employer, M/F/D/V



PATIENTS FIRST IN EVERYTHING WE DO

Continued from page 2

As a result of your irresponsibility, you have cast a negative light on the entire college. More specifically, you have jeopardized the respectability of the English Department—the umbrella under which 'The Point' originated. Not only that, you might very well have called into question the department's academic integrity in the eyes of others.

As FSC's official news source, the paper is undoubtably the initial point of contact with the school for many outside of the college community. Because of this, there is a certain amount of discipline and tact which must be exercised in shaping a possible first impression. As a Professional Writing major, I am outraged by your ignorance and your grievous errors in editorial judgement.

In a 1998 speech, 'Oregonian' editor Sandra Mims Rowe addressed the level of professionalism exhibited by the modern news media when she observed: "The high road is there if newspapers will take it. If newspaper journalism and journalists long for greater respect, then newspaper editors must supply the discipline to play down—not to play up—the trivial, the perverse, the bizarre."

I agree; and I strongly believe that 'The Point' is up to this challenge. Currently, however, the paper falls short of attaining such a goal.

For it to rise above its present mediocrity, there must first be a more professional approach taken to the editorial tasks at hand. Future editors will have to be open to criticism and the advice from both staff and readers, and be more willing to tap the wealth of experience harbored by Doris Schmidt, faculty advisor to 'The Point.'

By doing so, they will succeed in producing a more engaging forum that will serve to draw people in instead of push them away. And only then will 'The Point' become what it should be—a vital focal point for on-campus news and intellectual exchange.

Brian M. Gelinas,
FSC Professional Writing major

Mr. Gelinas: You seem so very sure as to what "my" staff does, is and needs and the adverse effect I am having on them. Oddly enough, I can't say I've ever seen you in the Point office. Are you a mysterious staffer who shows up at night?

The Point staff consists of myself, Amy Bobrowski, who I am training (rather poorly) as replacement Editor-in-Chief; Justin Crawford, without whose invaluable assistance I would have lost even more of my mind; Kathleen Coughlin, who comes in to Copy Edit the paper when her schedule allows; Heather Rhodes, who has put up with erratic scheduling and ill-defined duties when others would have (and actually have) quit; Joanna Jackson who follows every story diligently and with a dedication I've seen in no other contributor to the paper; and Shawn Moriarty who (despite what some think) has a firm grasp on the local and national sports scene.

That's seven people. Seven people who take time out of their day every day to make sure the paper gets out, who spend late nights in a windowless office to put the paper together out of the scraps we get for submissions. Seven people who have cut classes and sacrificed free time to make sure that there is twelve pages of content sitting in the racks week after week after week. These seven people are worth a hundred times as many duffers who just sit on their asses taking pot shots at something they do not, cannot, or will not contribute to.

You want to hold this paper up to the standards of a professional weekly paper, fine. A professional weekly would have the full staff of qualified reporters needed to put out a lot more than 12 pages; a professional weekly would have an advertising department to generate consistent income with which to pay these people; a professional weekly would not be mired in several layers of bureaucracy to merely get the basic equipment needed to run an office. And yes, a professional weekly would have a professional Editor-in-Chief. I am not a professional and have never claimed to be. I merely saw a school paper that was not only an embarrassment in terms of quality but completely devoid of content. Per-

haps you feel it is still an embarrassment, but at least because of the content and not the lack thereof.

My field is not journalism. If I had my way I would be editing a fiction magazine, but I saw something that I thought was wrong and went to correct it. Yes Mr. Gelinas, I have taken it upon myself to do a number of things to the paper and none of them professional; but when there was such a crisis on the paper before, when articles were being written without heed to quality or context, when films were being reviewed that had not been seen by the reviewers, when content was merely juggled from page to page and republished for three consecutive weeks, when the paper had the literary quality of a grade-schooler's fanboy 'zine, where were you then?

And yes, Mr. Gelinas, I do have an agenda. If I had my way I would actually be putting out more material that could be found in the likes of Adbusters, The Utne Reader or disinformation, but I realize that I have an audience to which such stories would be anathema. This did not stop me from trying to open a few minds. Did I go about my conversions the wrong way? Very likely; me and Saint Travinia both.

As for jeopardizing the respectability of the English Department, I don't know where you're getting your information from (although I have a pretty strong hunch), but all the members of the English (as well as the History, Computer Science, Sociology and Nursing) departments that have approached me were in favor of the paper and the changes happening to it.

One of the first things I had done when I signed on was to design a format for the paper where each page was the province of a different editorial section. This later proved to be unwieldy as the submissions we received from students never fit comfortably into this mold. Again a professional weekly would not have this problem as the staff could fill the space.

At this point, it could be argued that perhaps the paper does not have the staff because, as Mr. Gelinas says, I am "arrogant," "self-aggrandizing" and "narrow-minded." Well, even if he was right, if one is afraid to work somewhere or to work for something because the person in charge is a dick, good luck on your job search in the real world.

As for my personal attack of readers; of the three I have made, two of those "insulted" went on to write and publish articles for the paper. The third was someone who had volunteered to work on the paper and then refused every assignment. Anything that person had to say about the quality of the paper meant nothing as far as I'm concerned.

So this is my last issue serving on the Point, I graduate in May. I think it is good that I am leaving, as the paper has become more of a "what will he say next" affair. I am not Howard Stern and have no desire to be. If I shock you, fine, but that is only part of my job. If you are not outraged then you are not paying attention. I'm glad that I was able to provoke a response from people, but it is wearing thin and I can see that if it were to go on, it would spiral out of control. However, if I'm the only reason that the staff isn't as numerous as it should be, then to all you delicate flowers out there, your excuse is gone. Come down to the paper next year and prove me wrong.

And as for you Mr. Gelinas, your letter was extremely well-written, well thought out, and moved from topic to topic with facile ease. You are a professional writing major and it shows. You apparently have strong opinions as to the direction The Point should be taking and have concern as to what the future holds for the paper. For these reasons I seriously, and publicly, nominate you to the position of Managing Editor for the Fitchburg State College Student Journal beginning next semester (Fall 2001). The nomination has been approved by the existing Executive Board and merely waits your acceptance to make it official. I am putting you in the same position that valuable resource, Doris Schmidt put me in over a year and a half ago: put up or shut up, Mr. Gelinas. It's as simple as that.

James Sposato
Editor-in-Chief

Team 103 Defeats Hammer Heads in Inner Tube Water Polo Championship

By Skip Daily IV

Team 103, captained by Mike Duval triumphed over the Hammer Heads captained by Jeremy Lovett at this years Inner Tube Water Polo Tournament. The undefeated Hammer Heads took the first seed into the Championship tournament and easily advanced to the finals over The Drunken Monkeys. Team 103 with the 3rd seed had a much tougher task against Free Money and the Funk About Water Polo. Once advancing to the finals both captains received tremendous contributions from their teammates.

The Hammer Head's goalie Chris Dilassaro was outstanding, stopping 39 of 50 shots. He was assisted by Julie Flood, Boudu Bingay, and Troy Kelly on defense.

Lovett, Al Fortin and Corey Norton were the big guns up front but they weren't enough to penetrate the 103 defense, lead by Mike Martel and Karl Watkins. Team 103 also benefited from having the top goal-scoring tandem in the league (Brian Johnson and Jeremy Halper).

The game was neck and neck. It was not looking good for Team 103. With less than 2 minutes remaining in the second half defender Beth Lovel passes to mid-pooler Karl Watkins of Team 103 score an equalizing goal to send the Championship Match into Overtime. In overtime it was all Team 103. Less than a minute into the extra period, All Star Melanie Munyon passes the ball to a tightly covered Johnson who



fired the game winning goal past Dilassaro. Team 103 wins 12-11 in over time.

And the winner is...

So, the results of the Point's great 21st century hemi-demi-semi-annual all-star sports trivia contests are in, and our congratulations go out to Carolyn Murphy, who won the pair of free Red Sox tickets by correctly answering all twenty questions. Erik Hanson won the second place prize: a gift certificate to Outdoor Endeavors on John Fitch Highway. The Point would like to thank all who participated in the contest, and invite the campus community to be on the lookout for our next contest, scheduled for next semester. The official answers:

- 1) Fenway Park first opened on April 20th, 1912.
- 2) The last NHL player to play without wearing a helmet was Craig MacTavish, who finished his last NHL season with the St. Louis Blues in 1997.
- 3) The NFL player who holds the all-time career record for passing efficiency is Steve Young. Young retired with a 64.3% completion percentage, and a 96.8 career quarterback rating.
- 4) The golfer who has won a PGA record six Master's tournaments is Jack Nicklaus winning in 1963, 65', 66', 72', 75', and 86'.
- 5) The pitcher holding the all-time record for most innings pitched in the World Series (with 146) is Whitey Ford. He went 10-8 in eleven World Series appearances for the New York Yankees.
- 6) Cassius Clay upset Sonny Liston to win the heavyweight boxing title on February 25, 1964. Clay changed his name to Muhammad Ali the day after his win.
- 7) The Chicago Cubs last won a World Series in 1908.
- 8) The player who was tied with Roy Emerson for the most men's tennis grand slam singles titles with 12 is Pete Sampras. (Thanks to our readers for pointing out that Sampras now actually has 13 career grand slam singles titles; you all got it right, so this question did not play a part in determining the outcome of the contest.)
- 9) Baseballer Eddie Matthews appeared on the cover of the first Sports Illustrated on August 15, 1954.

10) Nick Esasky led the 1989 Boston Red Sox with 30 home runs. He hit 122 homers in eight major league seasons.

11) The driver who has led every lap of a NASCAR race is Jeff Burton, who led all 300 laps at New Hampshire International Speedway last fall. The other driver to do it was Cale Yarborough in 1975.

12) Wilt Chamberlain holds the record for most rebounds in an NBA game. He grabbed 55 rebounds for the Philadelphia Warriors against the Boston Celtics on November 24, 1960. He also holds the NBA records for rebounds in a season, and in a career.

13) The only baseball player to win the MVP and rookie of the year award in the same year is Fred Lynn, who did it while playing with the Boston Red Sox in 1975. Lynn batted .331, with 21 homers and 105 RBI's.

14) Three Moriarty's have played in Major League Baseball. Bill played shortstop for the Reds in 1909, Ed played second base for the Boston Braves in 1935-36, and George played first base, third base, and outfield for the Cubs, Yankees, Tigers, and White Sox between 1903 and 1916.

15) Edwin Moses has won the most consecutive sanctioned competitions in any one track and field event. He won 122 straight competitions in the 400-meter hurdles from August 1977, to June 1987.

16) Brazil has won four of the sixteen World Cup titles (1958, 1962, 1970, 1994).

17) The only boxer to finish his professional career without a loss is Rocky Marciano. Marciano (from Brockton, MA) ended his nine-year career in September of 1955, with a record of 49-0.

18) Former Pats coach Pete Carroll is now the head coach at USC.

19) The men's college basketball coach who holds the career record for victories is Dean Smith with 879.

20) The second most no-hitters thrown by any other major league pitcher is four. Sandy Koufax did it with the Los Angeles Dodgers, pitching one each year from 1962-65, including a perfect game against the Chicago Cubs on September 9, 1965.